

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed September 9, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-4 remain pending in this application, of which claims 1 and 4 are the independent claims. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,027,253 to Ota et al. ("Ota").

Claim 1 recites:

An optical fiber block for aligning an optical waveguide device, comprising: an optical-fiber-alignment portion having an array of V grooves for accommodating non-coated optical fibers of a ribbon fiber, said array of V grooves including first V grooves disposed at both ends of said array of V grooves and an array of second V grooves that is different from said first V grooves disposed between said first V grooves and in immediate contact with said first V grooves . . .

Support for the amendment of claim 1 is found in the specification (e.g. FIG. 5, reference nos. 212, 213 and accompanying text). The feature of immediate contact affords simple and efficient construction by means of a two-step etching process on the optical-fiber-alignment portion (See FIGs. 6A, 6B).

Firstly, Ota does not disclose said "array of V grooves" nor said "first V grooves." Ota makes clear what a "V-groove" is (e.g., col. 4, line 29: "V-grooves 3"). Inner surface 8-1 in Ota is not a V-groove. In fact, page 2 of the Office Action acknowledges that it is trying to characterize "end parts of grooves" as V-grooves. Ota fails to disclose said "array of V grooves," fails to disclose said "first V grooves," and fails

to anticipate the invention as recited in claim 1 for at least these reasons.

Secondly, Ota fails to disclose “an array of second V grooves . . . disposed between said first V grooves and in immediate contact with said first V grooves.” Instead, Ota shows a gap (e.g., FIG. 1) between what the Office Action mischaracterizes as “the first grooves” and the array of second grooves. For this reason too, Ota fails to anticipate the invention as recited in claim 1.

As to claim 2, it has been amended for clarity. Support for the amendment is found in the specification (e.g., FIG. 5 and accompanying text).

Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and are likewise deemed to be patentable over Ota for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is patentable.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,240,235 to Uno et al. (“Uno”).

Claim 4 recites

. . . performing a primary etching on one end of said optical fiber block to a first predetermined depth to form an optical-fiber-alignment portion and a secondary etching on the same end to a second predetermined depth to form an array of V grooves; performing a third etching on the other end of said optical fiber block to a third predetermined depth . . .

By contrast, Uno merely discloses that a mold (col. 30, line 1: “the mold to be used in producing an optical fiber guide . . .”) for producing the optical fiber block may be etched, as page 3 of the Office Action acknowledges. There is no disclosure or suggestion of, for example, “etching on one end of said optical fiber block” as explicitly required by the language of claim 4. Moreover, Uno fails to disclose, or even to suggest, the three separate etchings specifically required by the language of claim 4. For at least these

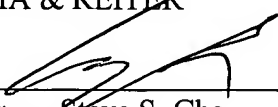
reasons, Uno fails to anticipate the invention as recited in claim 4. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in the event of any perceived outstanding issues so that passage of the case to issue can be effected without the need for a further Office Action.

In the event that any additional fee is required to continue the prosecution of this Application as requested, please charge such fee to Deposit Account No. 502-470.

Respectfully submitted,

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